

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Greta Johnson
Director of Communications & Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of Executive Shapiro
executivepress@summitoh.net
330-643-2656

County Executive and Council recognize North American First People’s Day

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed legislation recognizing North American First People’s Day on October 3, 2022. First People’s Day was first recognized by County Council in 2019 after students at The Lippman School of Akron proposed the day to honor the first people of this land as part of their longstanding relationship with the Northern Cheyenne Nation of Montana. First People’s Day is an opportunity for remembrance, mourning, and healing for all residents as we reckon with the history of indigenous people and culture in Summit County.

“By learning, reflecting, and collaborating with today’s indigenous nations and descendants of indigenous nations, we can address the atrocities of the past and move toward a future where we honor the native people of Summit County and beyond,” said Executive Shapiro, “If our students can start a tradition such as this, surely we can continue to bring about positive change for the betterment of our County and for our indigenous peoples.”

This area of Ohio was historically a hunting ground for the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) but became home to the Seneca-Cayuga and Lenape (Delaware) peoples decades later as they fled the eastern seaboard. As more Europeans settled in Ohio, indigenous people were pushed further west until the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced the remaining natives to either assimilate or migrate to what is now Kansas and Oklahoma. The Seneca-Cayuga and Lenape were but two examples of the many First Nations subjected to genocide, forced migration, and forced assimilation. To truly celebrate North American First People’s Day, we must remember the realities of their treatment and work to renew trust and goodwill for a brighter future.

“Summit County Council is proud to recognize the rich history and culture of the North American First Nations,” said Council President Elizabeth Walters, “I hope that residents will consider participating in events and learning about indigenous history this year.”

Several local events will take place this year in honor of First People’s Day, including the annual Portage Path Walk on October 2 at 1:30pm. Members of the Northern Cheyenne Nation will lead the walk. A list of additional events is available here: <https://walkportagepath.com/walk-2022>.

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